Editor's Note:

Ever since databases became the way to keep track of donor information, people have been asking us "What is the best software?" By "best" they generally meant cheap, easy to use, able to sort through donors and tell you which one was most likely to make a large gift that day, required no maintenance, and would never go out of date and need to be upgraded! Well, we don't know such a program, and hope readers will tell us if they ever find such a thing.

We have been asked this question so frequently, we finally decided to create a comparison chart of the databases that we know are most in use by grassroots organizations. For those of you who are brand new to the world of fundraising databases, this chart gives you a place to start, because you can quickly see what features and functions you might want to look for in good donor management software. The items included on this chart are some of the features that many grassroots organizations have found that they needed. If you don't know what a particular feature is, ask about it to find out if it is something that you might need.

We know that as soon as we put it on our site, something about it will be out of date, as the software business changes every day. This is not a complete review of all fundraising software, but rather takes popular, and for the most part, most affordable, software packages and looks at their similarities and differences.

Please note that some features such as "Password Protection", "Volunteer Management" and "Event Tracking" cannot be adequately explained in a format like this. For example, "Password Protection" can be as simple as requiring a password to enter any part of the database to as complex as having different levels of security that allow some people to access names and contact information of donors, but not to their giving history. We encourage you to give feedback on this chart, and from time to time, we will revise and update it. We strongly recommend that you do not make a selection based *solely* on this chart: instead use the information provided here to determine what you most need from software, and which company might be able to provide it, and then visit their website and call their salespeople. Ask people who are using any of the software you're considering to find out what they like and don't like about the program.

Remember, there are many variables in choosing software. Price is an important one. However, remember that the base price of a software package may be very affordable, but by the time you add the modules you need, train the people who will be using the software, and pay for technical support, you can spend a lot more money.

We hope this chart gives you a good place to start your research for a fundraising database that meets your needs. The chart was put together by Amanda Ballard, and we owe her an enormous debt of gratitude as none of us realized how complicated something like this was going to be.

	FundRaiser Basic	eBase	Telosa Exceed! Basic	Fundraiser Select	eTapestry	Fundraiser Professional	GiftMaker	DonorPerfect	DonorPerfect Online	Telosa Exceed! Premier	Sage Fundraising 50 (formerly Paradigm)	Raiser's Edge
Platform	PC	PC or Mac	PC	PC	PC or Mac	PC	PC or Mac	PC	PC or Mac		PC	
Cost Initial Investment - Single Iser	680		\$ 100	61 150		\$3 8000	\$3 000	e2 005		¢3 005	\$3,000	***00053
Membership / Ongoing Software Costs(for online programs only)	C	\$50-75/year	4	÷-	\$31+ / month	\$£,000	4 ,990	, 900 0	\$29/month	\$0,000 0	\$£,500	97200
Support - Single User	Free	\$40/40 minute	\$249/year	\$280/year	\$26/month	\$425/year	\$598/year	\$695/year	\$24/month	\$619/year	\$850/year	\$1320/year
	None available	\$45/introduction course by consultant	\$259/person three part training	\$25/session	Purchase training libraries \$125 or \$300 per group session + trainer travel expense	\$25/session		variety	variety	\$1200/person standard		\$2,754
Training Months free support with purchase	unlimited		_	ယ		တ	22	သ		သ		0
mporvexport					•							
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Can create file for mail house	<		•	•		<	<	<	<	•	<	<
Correspondence												
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# Standard reports included	ω	Limited	30+	15	10	44	30+	100+	30+	50+	80+	120+
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Can generate specialized reports		<	Limited	<	<	<	<	<	•	<	<	<
Can query any field Can query user defined fields		< <	< <	< <	< <	ς ς	ς ς	< <	< <	< <	<	((
Administrative Features												
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Can create user defined fields		<		Limited		<	<	<	<			<
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Volunteer Management_		Limited		·	Limited		Limited, \$. 69		
Fvent Tracking		Limited		- imited	(l imited	Limited \$	((((((((
Growth Potential		-			,	1	- C	,		•	,	,
Can customize with modules/add-ons		<	<	<	<		<	ζ.	<	<		<
Notes		-		findrion of the company		finding of the control of the contro						
Website		ebase.org	telosa.com	undraiser-soltware.com			cam	pagne.com donorperfect.com donorperfect.com telosa.com	donorperfect.com	telosa.com		
Sales Phone Number	1-800-348-6714		1-800-676-5831	1-800-348-6/14	1-888-739-3827	1-800-348-6714		=	1118-022-008-1	1-800-676-5831	0	1-80
Strengths	*Easy growth plan	*Low cost	*Easy growth plan	*Low training and support costs	*Low upfront costs	*Complete package	*Built-in prospect ranking	*Good event tracking features		*Strong event planning features	*Complete package	*Very powerful
	*Free technical support	*Cross platform	*Simple navigator *Customizable	*Customizable	*Can be accessed remotely	*Excellent customer service	*Low cost web- interface	*Flexible		*Good membership features		*Advanced optional modules
	*Excellent customer service		*Excellent customer service	*Helpful sales staff	*Excellent customer service		*Excellent customer service	*Extensive reports		*Excellent customer service		*Fully integrated with word, excel

Information for this report was gathered from marketing materials on company websites, conversations with sales representatives, and public forums on the Tech Soup website.
""Blackbaud offers promotional pricing packaging for small nonproifts.

_Programs may offer different levels of access to data to different users

_The capacity to provide these functions varies greatly between programs. \$ = extra charge for additional module